

**VA Health Care Utilization and
Services available for Veterans of
Operation Iraqi Freedom
*Operation Enduring Freedom***

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Current Information on War Veterans Available to VA

- Latest Update of roster, through 7/05
 - Provided to Dr. Kang, VHA's Environmental Epidemiology Service, 9/8/05
 - Contains list of veterans who have left active duty
 - Not possible to distinguish OIF from OEF veterans
- 433,398 OIF and OEF veterans combined
 - 43% (185,230) Active Duty troops
 - 57% (248,168) Reserve and National Guard

Use of DoD List of War Veterans Who Have Left Active Duty

- Roster used to check VA's electronic inpatient and outpatient records to determine which OIF/OEF veterans have accessed VA health care.
- Data are mainly administrative information and are not based on careful review of each patient record or confirmation of each diagnosis.
- These administrative data must be interpreted with caution; they *only apply to OIF/OEF veterans who have accessed VA health care.*

VA Health Care Utilization FY 2002-05

- **Overall, 28% (119,247) of total have sought VA health care**
- **Separated Veterans by Service Component**
 - **185,230 Active Duty Troops**
 - **31% (57,488) have sought VA health care**
 - **248,168 Reserve/National Guard Members**
 - **25% (61,759) have sought VA health care**

- **OEF/OIF veterans evaluated by VA in FY 2002-05 represents ~2% of the 4.9 million individual veterans who received VA health care in 2004**
- **To date, OEF/OIF veterans have constituted a relatively low proportion of total VA patients, although obviously these veterans have recently suffered much greater acute trauma**

Demographic Characteristics of OEF/OIF Veterans Utilizing VA Health Care

		% Veterans (n = 119,247)
Gender	Male	87 %
	Female	13
Age Group	<20	2
	20-29	52
	30-39	23
	≥40	23
Branch	Air Force	13
	Army	65
	Marine	11
	Navy	11
Unit Type	Active	48
	Reserve/Guard	52
Rank	Enlisted	92
	Officer	8

Diagnoses

- **Wide range of medical and psychological conditions (more than 6,500 discrete ICD-9 diagnostic codes)**
- **Three most common health problems:**
 - **musculoskeletal ailments (principally joint and back disorders)**
 - **mental disorders**
 - **dental problems**

Frequency of Diagnoses (>20%)

Diagnosis (Broad ICD-9 Categories)	%
Mental Disorders (290-319)	30.9
Diseases of Nervous System/ Sense Organs (320-389)	27.1
Disease of Digestive System (520-579)	30.1
Diseases of Musculoskeletal/Connective System (710-739)	39.0
Symptoms, Signs and Ill Defined Conditions (780-799)	29.4

*Hospitalizations and outpatient visits as of 10/7/05; veterans can have multiple diagnoses with each healthcare encounter. A veteran is counted only once in any single Diagnostic Category but can be counted in multiple categories.

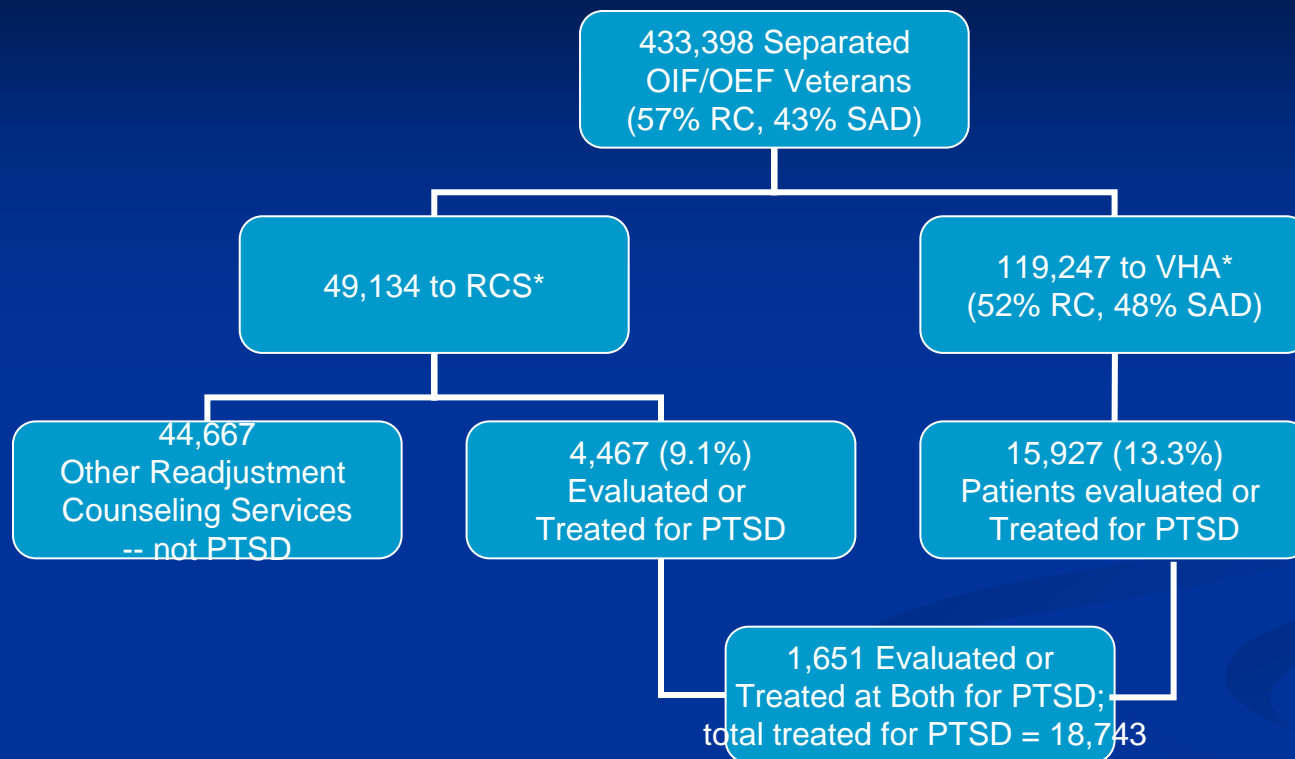
Frequency of Possible Mental Disorders *

Disease Category (ICD 290-319 code)	Number of Veterans**
PTSD (ICD-9CM 309.81)+	15,927
Nondependent Abuse of Drugs (ICD 305)	13,888
Depressive Disorders (311)	11,100
Neurotic Disorders (300)	9,055
Affective Psychoses (296)	5,820
Alcohol Dependence Syndrome (303)	2,321
Sexual Deviations and Disorders (302)	1,527
Special Symptoms, Not Elsewhere Classified (307)	1,414
Acute Reaction to Stress (308)	1,170
Drug Dependence (304)	975

Note – Diagnoses obtained from computerized administrative data and include “rule-out” or “provisional, pending further evaluation”; made by trained healthcare providers, but about one-third of coded diagnoses may not be confirmed.

** A total of 36,893 unique patients received a diagnosis of a possible mental disorder. More than one mental disorder diagnosis can be entered separately in this table for each veteran.

+ Does not include information on PTSD from Vet Centers or veterans who had a diagnosis of Adjustment Reaction.



*Approximately 153,603 separated OIF/OEF unique veterans presented to RCS, VHA medical facilities or both.

- 18,743 (~12.2%) of 153,603 separated OIF/OEF unique veterans presented to RCS, VHA medical facilities or both with a potential diagnosis of PTSD

Abbreviations & Notes:

- RC – Reserve Components
- SAD – Separated Active Duty
- RCS – Readjustment Counseling Service (Vet Centers)

Mental Health Services Provided

■ Vet Centers

- 207 community-based Vet Centers in all 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Guam**
- Located outside medical facilities**
- Mix of direct counseling and help accessing other programs**
- New program: 100 returned veterans hired as outreach workers to assist troops in transition from military to civilian life**

Basic VHA MH Services

- **Outpatient MH Clinics**
- **Inpatient Psychiatric Care programs**
- **Substance Abuse Treatment programs**
- **Domiciliary Care**

VA Medical Center Programs: PTSD

- **More than 200 specialized programs for treatment of PTSD**
- **Specialty PTSD expertise represented in every VA medical center facility**

■ **Outpatient PTSD Services**

- PTSD clinical teams
- Substance Use and PTSD Team

■ **Inpatient PTSD Services**

- PTSD day hospitals
- Specialized inpatient units
- Evaluation and Brief-treatment units
- Residential rehabilitation programs

■ **Women's Focus Programs**

- Outpatient Women's Stress Disorder and Treatment Teams
- PTSD inpatient treatment units for women veterans

National Center for PTSD

- **Research**

- Clinical trials on epidemiology, diagnosis, psychobiology, treatment of PTSD
- Collaborative studies with DoD on resilience factors that strengthen against development of stress related disorders

- **Consultation to clinicians, scientists and policy makers concerning treatment, research and education regarding PTSD**

- **Web site (<http://www.ncptsd.va.gov>)**
- **Iraq War Clinician Guide**
 - **Developed to assist VA clinicians meet the needs of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan**
 - **Revised in collaboration with US Army clinicians**
 - **Issues of families of wounded veterans also addressed**

Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) VAMC Durham

- **Established 2004 to focus on issues of post deployment health for returning OIF/OEF Veterans.**

VA Medical Center Programs: Other OEF/OIF Relevant

- **Health promotion and a preventive care approach**
 - Focus on patient and family education about good health care practices and behaviors to avoid
 - Avoids “over pathologizing” the veteran
- **Returning Veterans Outreach, Education and Care (RVOEC) programs**
 - Promote awareness at the local level
 - At least one in each VISN
 - Target sites associated with large numbers of returning service members

- **Telemental health**
- **Substance use disorder treatment programs**
- **Mental health in Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)**
- **Compensated Work Therapy programs**
- **Homeless Residential Care Programs**
- **Polytrauma Centers with MH staff**

Summary

- **28% of separated OIF/OEF veterans have enrolled for VA health care.**
- **Recent Iraq and Afghan veterans are presenting to VA with a wide range of medical and psychological conditions**
- **Iraq and Afghan veterans have access to VA health care**
 - **Free of charge for two years following separation**
 - **For any health problem possibly related to wartime service**

- **VHA will continue to monitor the health status of recent Iraq and Afghan veterans**
- **VHA will ensure that VA tailors its health care programs to meet the needs of this newest generation of war veterans**